

# موسیٰ علیہ السلام Mūsā



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*by*

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فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ

fā'awḥayna ʾila mūsā ʾani ʾidrib biʿaṣāka-l-baḥra  
We revealed to Mūsā “Strike the sea with your staff “  
(Sūratu-sh-Shurʿarāʾ 26:63)

“It will provide a road for you.”

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“*Qasas al-Anbiya*” (قصص الأنبياء) or Stories of the Prophets  
“*Fir’oun, Hadhrat Musa and the Taqdeer of Allāh*”



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وَإِذْ كُنَّا فِي الْكِتَابِ مُوسَىٰ إِنَّكَ كَانَ مَحْضًا وَإِنَّا كَانُوا لَمُؤْمِنِينَ

wa-dhkur fi-l-kitābi mūsā

°innahu kāna mukhlāṣan wa kāna rasūlan nabiyyā

Mention Mūsā in the Book.

He was truly sincere and was a Messenger and a Prophet.

(Sūratu-l-Maryam 19:51)

The Prophet Mūsā (مُوسَى / mūsā = pulled from the water), or Moses as he is known in English is mentioned 126 times by name in the Qurʾān. All told there are at least 19 distinct stories about Mūsā (ﷺ) in the Qurʾān and we have but an hour or so in which to speak, so I have to be very selective and I have chosen from among the many stories of Mūsā (ﷺ) to tell what led up to the parting of the sea.

The story actually appears in different places, but let us start with this one because it was at this point that Mūsā (ﷺ) became a Prophet, which changed his life and ours and the world's forever.

فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ وَسَارَ بِأَهْلِهِ آنَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا قَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ  
امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا عَلَيَّ أَتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ جَذْوَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ

falamā qaḍā mūsā-l-°ajala wasāra bi-ahlihi

ānasa min jānibi-t-ṭūrī nāran

qāla li-°ahlihi °umkuthū °innī °ānastu nāran

la°allee ātukum minhā bi-khābarin °aw jadhwatin mina-n-nāri

la°allakum taṣṭālūn

When Moses completed his term (of service)

and was traveling with his family (in the desert)

he saw a fire from the direction of the Mount (Sinai).

He said to his family:

“Wait here! I see a fire far off, maybe I can bring you some news

(about where we are and the way we should take),

or a burning brand from the fire

to (kindle a fire and) warm yourselves.”

(Sūratu-l-Qaṣas 28:29)

The other accounts which occur in S. 20:9-24, S. 27:7-14 are similar but this one mentions an important piece of information having to do with Mūsā (ﷺ) having completed his “term”.

What is meant by this word “term” or appointed time or الأجل – and how or where does it fit into the story of Nabī Mūsā (ﷺ)?

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Mūsā ؑ was born into the family of ʾImrān of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl living in Egypt, in a time when the ruling Pharaoh (*firʿawn*/فرعون) had enslaved them after the time of the prophet Yūsuf ؑ. Around the time of the birth of ʾMūsā ؑ, Firʿawn had a dream, in which he saw fire coming from the city of Salem or al-Quds, which burnt everything in his kingdom except that of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl. When the Firʿawn described his dream to his priests and soothsayers, they predicted that the fall of Firʿawn would be brought about by a boy from Bani Israel. When Firʿawn was informed that one of the male children would grow up to overthrow him, he ordered the killing of all new-born boys of Bani Israel in order to prevent the prediction from occurring. According to the magicians and soothsayers and their observations of the stars, the one who would overthrow him would be born in a particular year so Firʿawn should kill all the boy children born in that particular year, but the rest should be spared in order to maintain the future population of slaves. Furthermore they foretold that the one who would accomplish the overthrow of Firʿawn would do so either by his hand or by his tongue. An important prophecy, as we shall see. Harūn ؑ, his brother, was born in a year prior to the prophesized year, while Mūsā ؑ was born in the year in which infants were to be killed.

It was decided that every boy born to the women of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl henceforth would be put to death. Firʿawn also enlisted the services of thousands of midwives who were called in from all parts of the land. A midwife was appointed to every house of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl, and soldiers were permanently stationed in all areas where Banī ʾIsrāʾīl resided. As soon as a boy was born, the midwife made her report. Soldiers were called in to take away the baby who was slaughtered.

Some 90,000 male infants were slaughtered in Firʿawn's plan of horror to thwart the Decree of Allāh ﷻ. Not a single male infant of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl was spared.

When Mūsā ؑ was born the midwife appointed by Firʿawn took the infant in her hands she was overwhelmed by love for this beautiful baby. She had never set eyes on such a beautiful infant before and she told the baby's mother not to be worried or afraid. She would inform the soldiers that a dead girl was born and buried by her. When the midwife left, she informed the guards outside that she had buried the dead girl baby. After the midwife left, the guards entered the house to confirm her report.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

When Maryam, the sister of Mūsā ؑ, saw the soldiers entering the house, fear drove her into a state of panic. She rushed to her mother's room, grabbed the infant and blindly, not knowing what she was doing, threw him into the kitchen stove which was at that time blazing with fire for the evening meal.

After searching the place and questioning the mother of Mūsā ؑ, the soldiers were satisfied and left. By the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ it never occurred to the hunter killers to seek the grave where the dead baby girl was supposedly buried. The mother asked her daughter: "Where did you conceal your brother?" She replied: "Oh my mother, I panicked and threw the baby in the stove." The mother almost lost her senses. She rushed to the fire. When mother and daughter reached the oven, the fire was blazing. Both began crying. While they were crying, they heard from inside the oven the pleasant gurgling sound of a baby. His mother put her hand into the fire and retrieved her baby and found Mūsā ؑ unscathed. The fire had no effect on him. On the contrary, the the baby was smiling.

The mother of Mūsā ؑ suckled him in secret after his birth as the hunter killers of Fir'awn were continuing to travel about the land killing the boy children of Banī 'Isrā'īl during this period. Now commenced the dangerous task of caring for her infant in utmost secrecy. She knew that the danger was ever present as the slaughter of babies of Banī 'Isrā'īl meanwhile continued unabated. Day by day Barkah the mother of Mūsā ؑ became more fearful and apprehensive fearing that her secret would be somehow revealed. Then Allāh ﷻ inspired her with the assurance:

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ ۖ إِذْ أَخَفَّتْ عَلَيْهِ ۖ فَالْقَيْدُ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِي وَلَا  
تَحْزَنِي ۚ إِنَّا رَأَوْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَجَاعِلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

wa awhaynāa ilāa 'ummi mūsā 'an arḍi'ihī

fa-'idha khifti 'alayhi fa'alqīhi fi-l-yammi wa lā takhāfi wa lā taḥzanī  
'innā rāddūhu 'ilayki wa jā'ilūhu mina-l-mursalīn

So We revealed to the mother of Moses: –

“Suckle him!

If you fear for him, cast him in the river without any fear or regret,  
for We shall restore him to you,  
and make him to be from the message bearers.”

(Sūratu-l-Qaṣaṣ 28:7)

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

This inspiration brought peace and tranquillity to the mother of Mūsā ؑ. Meanwhile the brutality of Fir°awn increased. A systematic search of the homes of Banī °Isrā°il was underway and his mother now feared detection and the slaughter of the baby ؑ.

She asked a carpenter to make a small wooden box for her. and the carpenter upon completing the ark handed it to °Imrān, the father of Mūsā ؑ. °Imrān, trusting the carpenter, told him that the box was for concealing his baby from Fir°awn. The baby would be concealed in the ark and sent to a safe place.

When the carpenter left °Imrān, he set off straight to the palace to inform Fir°awn of his discovery, as he knew that he would be munificently rewarded by Fir°awn for this information. On reaching the palace, he was ushered into the presence of Fir°awn.

However, once in the presence of Fir°awn, as much as the carpenter endeavoured to explain what he knew, he was unable to do so. Miraculously he became dumb and could not utter any intelligible word and could only make incoherent and incomprehensible sounds. The carpenter's incoherence greatly annoyed and angered Fir°awn. Thinking that the carpenter was jesting and wasting his time, he ordered him to be whipped and expelled. After receiving a severe whipping, the carpenter was thrown out of the palace.

On reaching his home, the carpenter resolved to inform Fir°awn of the hidden baby by means of a letter. As he set down to write his contemplated letter, he suddenly became blind. Overcome with panic, the carpenter understood that the baby for whom he had made the ark was in reality that very same infant about whom the astrologers had predicted would be the doom of Fir°awn . This baby would be the Nabī ؑ.

The carpenter sincerely repented. As he repented, Allāh ﷻ restored his vision. He immediately accepted the baby as the Nabī ؑ. He was the first person from among the Qibttiyah (Copts or the people of Fir°awn) to accept the Prophet Mūsā ؑ.

Next the mother of Nabī Musa ؑ carefully examined the ark and blocked the slightest opening or crevice to prevent any water entering. After she had prepared the ark, she bathed her infant, dressed him up beautifully, hugged and kissed him lovingly and with tears in her eyes she assigned him to the ark. She closed and locked the lid.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

During the middle of the night, carrying the ark on her head, she set off for the River Nile as she was inspired by Allāh ﷻ. At a certain spot on the banks of the river, she lowered the ark from her head. Suddenly she saw a huge poisonous serpent coiled up. The serpent spoke clearly in her language and said: “If you place the ark in the river, I shall swallow the baby.” However the mother of Mūsā ؑ was a very saintly and intelligent lady and understood that it was a shayṭān. Upon her understanding the serpent immediately vanished. Taking the Name of Allāh ﷻ she assigned the ark to the waters of the Nile. With tears cascading down her cheeks her eyes followed the ark until finally it disappeared from her sight. Full of grief and with tears in her eyes she returned home.

She instructed her daughter to follow the course of the ark and to report back to her. As the daughter followed the ark along the riverbank she saw the ark was discovered by the wife of Firʿawn, ʾAsīyah ؑ, who took Mūsā ؑ home.

When Firʿawn first saw the child he was alarmed, as he feared that this was the one who was going to slay him, but when Mūsā ؑ, who was lying by the fireplace reached into the fire and drew out a coal and put it in his mouth, all his fears were allayed, because with his burnt hand and tongue he obviously could not be the one who would slay him by the hand or by his tongue. According to another story in Israʿiliyat *ḥadīth* Mūsā ؑ was playing in the lap of Firʿawn one day and he grabbed his beard. This action prompted the Firʿawn to consider Mūsā ؑ as the one who would overthrow him. The Firʿawn decided to kill Mūsā ؑ, but stopped when ʾAsīyah ؑ interceded and argued that he was just a baby. However Firʿawn decided to test Mūsā ؑ and had two plates set before him, one contained rubies and the other held glowing coals. Mūsā ؑ reached out for the rubies, but the angel Jibrīl ؑ directed his hand to the coals and Mūsā ؑ grabbed a glowing coal and put it in his mouth, burning his tongue and searing and scarring his hand, thus making it unlikely that he was the one who was going to kill the Firʿawn.

Allāh ﷻ says in the Qurʾān that when ʾAsīyah ؑ ordered wet nurses for Mūsā ؑ, Moses refused to be breastfed because Allāh ﷻ had forbidden Mūsā ؑ from being fed by any wet nurse so as to reunite him with his mother. His sister, Maryam, worried that Mūsā ؑ had not been fed for some time went to ʾAsīyah ؑ and told her that she thought she knew someone who could breast feed him.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Islamic tradition states that after being questioned, she was ordered to bring the woman being discussed.

فَرَدَّ نَاهُ إِلَىٰ أُمِّهِ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ  
وَلَنَعْلَمَنَّ أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

faradadnāhu °ilā °ummihi kay taqarra °aynuhā walā taḥzana  
wa lita°lama °anna wa°da-llāhi ḥaqqun  
wa lākinna °aktḥarahum lā ya°lamūn

Thus We restored him to his mother  
so that she might be comforted and not grieve,  
and that she might know that the promise of Allāh is true,  
but most of them do not know.

(Sūratu-l-Qaṣaṣ 28:13)

As the child Mūsā ؑ was put to her breast, he immediately started suckling. Fir°awn was astonished and asked; “Who are you? This child has refused to take any other breast but yours.”

Had she told the truth, Fir°awn would have known that the child was an Israelite and would have killed Mūsā ؑ instantly. However, Allah gave her inner strength and she replied: “I am a woman of sweet milk and sweet smell, and no child refuses me.” This answer satisfied Fir°awn and the woman was appointed to be the wet nurse of Mūsā ؑ. She continued to breast feed him for a long time.

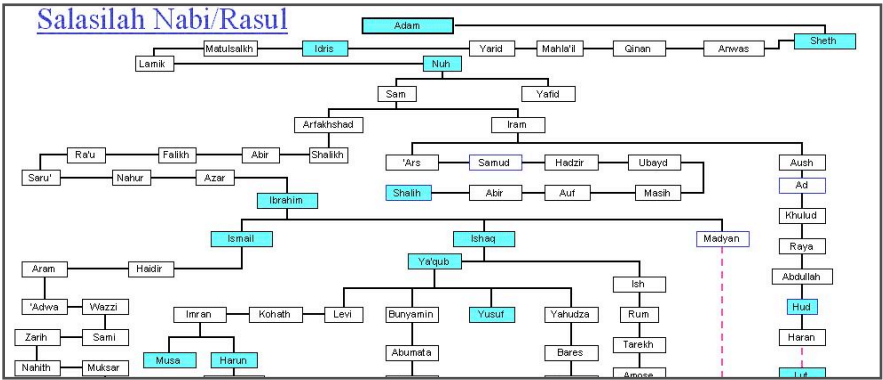
When he was bigger and was weaned, she was granted the privilege of visiting him. Mūsā ؑ along, with his brother Harūn ؑ, was raised in the palace of Fir°awn and went to the school for the children of the house of Fir°awn and so not only gained a very high level of education but also came to understand the inner workings of the court of Fir°awn, both secular and, perhaps more importantly, religious, for as the Greek historian Herodotus once observed, “there are no more religious people in this world than Egyptians.”

The result of this was that, although both he and his brother were from Banī °Isrā°il, to any casual observer that would appear to be princely dwellers of the court of Fir°awn. Their mother Barkḥa, (whose name also given as Yuhanaḍḥ or Yasmad) was his teacher in the ways of Banī °Isrā°il so that Mūsā ؑ grew up knowing that he was not really the son of Fir°awn nor was he at all an Egyptian but rather that he was the son of °Imrān from the clan of Levi who came from the family of Nabī Yaqūb ؑ and further knew that Nabī Yūsuf ؑ had saved Egypt from famine hundreds of years before.



## Mūsā ﷺ and the Parting

Geneology of the Prophets ﷺ from Adam ﷺ to Musa ﷺ and Harūn ﷺ.



Also of great significance was that her teachings gently reached the ears of the kind hearted wife of Fir<sup>c</sup>awn and gradually brought her to the way of montheism or *Tawhīd* (توحيد). It is firmly believed by all Muslims that ʿAsīyah ﷺ became a sincere believer who fully submitted herself to Allāh ﷻ, despite being the wife of Fir<sup>c</sup>awn. According to ḥadīth, she will be among the first women to enter Paradise because she took the way of *Tawhīd* over Fir<sup>c</sup>awn's way of *shrik* (شرك) or polytheism. Indeed the Prophet ﷺ mentioned her as one of the four greatest women of all time, alongside Maryam ﷺ, the mother of ʿIsā ﷺ, his own first wife Khadijah ﷺ, and his daughter Fatimah ﷺ. Allāh ﷻ mentions her in Qurʾān as an example to Muslims of all times.

وَضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا امْرَأَتَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي  
الْجَنَّةِ وَانْجِنِي مِّنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَانْجِنِي مِّنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

wa daraba-llaāhu mathalan li-lladhīna ʿamanū  
ʾimrʾāta fir<sup>c</sup>awna ʾidh qālat rabbi ibnilī ʿindaka baytan fi-l-jannati  
wa najjinī min fir<sup>c</sup>awna wa ʿamalihi  
wa najjinī mina-l-qawmi-dh-dhalimīn

And Allāh sets forth, as an example to those who believe  
the wife of Fir<sup>c</sup>awn: Behold she said:

"O my Lord! Build for me a house in the Garden near to You,  
and save me from Fir<sup>c</sup>awn and his doings,  
and save me from the evil doers" ;

(Sūrtaul-Taḥrīm 66:11)



## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

When Mūsā was in his late teens ؑ, the Qur'an states that one day he was passing through a city in Egypt, he came across an Egyptian fighting with a member of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl. The Israelite begged him to help him in his fight with the Egyptian.

Mūsā ؑ intervened and became involved in the dispute and struck the Egyptian with his fists in a state of anger which resulted in his death of the Egyptian. Mūsā ؑ repented for he realised that he had done something terribly wrong and totally out of proportion in the scale of what was actually happening..

Allāh ﷻ recounts the story in this way:

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَىٰ حِينٍ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلَانِ هَٰذَا مِن  
شَيْعِنِ وَهَٰذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ فَاسْتَغَاثَهُ الَّذِي مِّنْ شَيْعِنِهِ عَلَى الَّذِي مِّنْ عَدُوِّهِ  
فَوَكَزَهُ مُوسَىٰ فَقَضَىٰ عَلَيْهِ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُّضِلٌ  
مُّبِينٌ قَالَ رَبِّ انِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي فَغَفَرَ لَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

wa dakhala-l-madīnata ʿala hīni ghaatin min ahlihā

fa-wajada fīhā rajulayni yaqtatilāni

hadha min shīʿatihi wa hadha miñ ʿaduwwihi

fa-ʾistagħathahu alladhee min shīʿatihi ʿala alladhī miñ ʿaduwwihi

fa-wakazahu mūsā fa-qaḍa ʿalayhi

qala hadha miñ ʿamali-sh-shayṭani

ʾinnahu ʿaduwwun mudillun mubīn •

qala rabbi ʾinnī ḍhālamtu nafsī faʾghfir lī fa-ghafara lahu

ʾinnahu huwa-l-ghafūru-r-raḥīm

And [one day] he entered the city

at a time when [most of] its people were [resting in their houses,]

unaware of what was going on [in the streets];

and found two men fighting there –

one from his party and the other from his enemy.

The one from his people asked for his support against the enemy.

So Mūsā hit him, dealing him a fatal blow.

He said, ‘This is part of Shayṭān’s work.

Truly he is an outright and misleading enemy.’

He said: My Lord! I have wronged my soul, so forgive me.

Then He forgave him. He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.

(Sūratu-l-Qaṣaṣ 28:15-16)

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Because the man, even though he was from the same tribe as Mūsā ؑ, appeared to be a troublemaker he added.

رَبِّ بِمَا أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ أَكُونَ ظَهِيرَ الْمُنْجَرِمِينَ

bimā an'amta 'alayya fa-lan akūna ḍḥahīran li-l-mujrimīn

“O my Sustainer! By all the blessings which You have granted me:  
Nevermore shall I aid those who are lost in wrongdoing!”

(Sūratu-l-Qaṣaṣ 28:17)

Indeed the very next day when Mūsā ؑ returned to the city he found the very same man again embroiled in a fight. This caused him to understand that he had taken the side of a troublemaker even though he originally had felt he was aiding an oppressed fellow tribesman. But worse, the news that Mūsā ؑ had murdered a man spread far and wide and the local Egyptian people were enraged and hatched a plan to kill Mūsā ؑ. Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

وَجَاءَ بِرَجُلٍ مِنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْعَى  
قَالَ يَا مُوسَى إِنَّ الْمَلَأَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِكَ لِتُكْتَلَوْا فَاخْرُجْ إِنِّي لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ

wa jā'a rajulun min aqṣā-l-madīnati yas'ā

qāla yā mūsā 'inna almalā'ā ya'tamirūna bika li-yaqtulūka

fa-'ukhruj 'innī laka mina-n-nāṣihīn

A man came running from the furthest part of the city,  
saying, 'Mūsā, the Council are conspiring to kill you, so leave!  
I am someone who brings you good advice.

(Sūratu-l-Qaṣaṣ 28:20)



## His Hijrah or Flight to Midian

Mūsā ؑ packed up his luggage and fled the palace of Fir'awn in the pitch dark when everyone was soundly asleep.

He had determined to go to Midian, an Arab land in the vicinity of Ma'in south of Amman and some 120 meters below sea level, It is known for thermal mineral hot springs and waterfalls where people have come for centuries for thermal treatments. It is in what is now Jordan which is a desert land where the power of Fir'awn did not reach. Noone went to bed in Midian in fear of guards of Fir'awn or his evil, which Mūsā ؑ left behind when he left the palace of Fir'awn. It is perhaps just a coincidence but the letters that form "Midian" are similar to the letters in "Madina", and for Mūsā ؑ it was as much a *hiirah* (هجرة) as was the journey of the Prophet ﷺ to Yathrib which, of course later became known as, Madinatun-n-Nabī.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

As he headed towards Midjan, Allāh ﷻ recounts he said,

وَمَا تَوْجَهَ تِلْقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبِّي أَن يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ

wa lammā tawajjaha tilqā'a madyana  
qala 'asa rabbī 'aā yahdiyanī sawā'a-s-sabīl

When he turned his face in the direction of Madyan,  
he said, 'Hopefully my Lord will guide me to the right way.'

(Sūratu-l-Qaṣaṣ 28:20)

After a long tiresome journey by camel he reached Midian, where,  
after watering his camel, he sat to take rest near the watering place.

As Mūsā ؑ sat resting he saw two young girls waiting at a distance.  
Their sheep were standing near the spring for drinking water but  
they were being crowded out by men and larger groups of people.  
Mūsā ؑ thought that the girls needed some help, and although he  
was tired and hungry he wanted to help them and asked them if they  
needed help. The girls were modest and bashful. They said that they  
were waiting so until the men and the clans might go away, saying  
that they were weak and their father was an old man. Mūsā ؑ drove  
the sheep to the spring to water them for the two girls as an act of  
kindness and concern. In return the girls expressed a deep sense of  
gratitude for this favor. After he had watered the sheep, they took  
the sheep and went home and Mūsā ؑ went back to rest in the  
shade. He was very tired after his eight day journey and made  
supplication (*du'ā'*) that Allāh ﷻ might send him some help, at  
which point the two girls returned to him.

فَجَاءَتْهُ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَمْشِي عَلَىٰ اسْنَحَيْئَةٍ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّي ذُوَّ غَوْلٍ لِّیَجْزِيكَ أَجْرًا مَّا سَقَيْتَ  
لَنَا فَلَمَّا جَاءَا وَوَقَصَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَصَصَ قَالَ لَا تَخَفْ جُئْتُ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

fa-jā'athuy 'ihdāhumā tamsbī 'alā 'istiḥyān  
qalat 'inna 'abī yad'ūka li-yajziyaka 'ājra mā saqayta lana  
falammā jā'ahu wa qaṣṣa 'alayhi-l-qaṣasa  
qāla lā takḥaf najawta mina-l-qawmi-ḏḥ-ḏḥalimīn

and then one of the two women came walking shyly up to him  
and said,

“My father is asking you to come

so that he may reward you for watering our flocks for us.”

When Mūsā came to their father and gave him his story, he said:

“Fear not! You have escaped from those wrongdoing people.”

(Sūratu-l-Qaṣaṣ 28:24)

## Mūsā ﷺ and the Parting

Here we must digress to explain a very important point in the story of Mūsā ﷺ so that things will become, <sup>in</sup>shallāh, more clear.

This “old man” (lit. *shaykh*/شيخ) was no other than the Prophet Shu‘ayb ﷺ (شعي; meaning = He who shows the right path). He was an ancient Midianite prophet, sometimes identified with the Biblical Prophet Jethro (though <sup>in</sup>Islām attributes to him many deeds not mentioned in the Bible). He is mentioned in the Qur‘ān a total of 11 times, and was a follower of the teachings of the Prophet Ibrahīm ﷺ. Shu‘ayb ﷺ was sent as a prophet to two communities, namely the Midianites (Q7:85-93) and the People of the Wood (Q26:176-177). (أصحاب الأيكة/āshābu-l-aykah).

To both the people, Shu‘ayb ﷺ proclaimed the faith of <sup>in</sup>Islām or Tawhīd and warned the people to end their fraudulent ways. When they did not repent, Allāh ﷻ destroyed both these communities in a very violent fashion, which is graphically described in Torah .

Prophet Shu‘ayb ﷺ is one of the few Arabian prophets mentioned by name in the Qur‘ān, the others being Ṣaliḥ, Hud, <sup>in</sup>Isma‘il ﷺ and Muhammad ﷺ. It is said that he was known by early Muslims as ‘the eloquent preacher amongst the prophets’, because he was granted talent and eloquence in his language.

Shu‘ayb ﷺ was appointed by Allāh ﷻ mainly as a prophet to the people who lived east of Mount Sinai, the people of Midian or, (alternative spelling) Madyan. The people of this land were said to be especially notorious for cheating others through dishonesty and, of course, for their immense mistake of idolatry.

It is also said he told his people to stop being dishonest in their daily activities. Although he preached and prophesied for a sustained period of time, the majority of the people refused to listen to him and rejected the Message. Shu‘ayb ﷺ, however, remained steadfast to Allāh ﷻ and consistently preached powerfully against the wicked, telling them of the punishment that had befallen the sinful before them. Shu‘ayb ﷺ warned the people that their ignorance would lead to the destruction of Midian, giving historical examples of earlier prophets, including Nūḥ, Hūd, Ṣaliḥ and Lūt ﷺ all of whose people were destroyed by Allāh ﷻ earlier in history.

His people taunted Shu‘ayb ﷺ and told him that, were it not for the prestigious family he came from, he would surely have been stoned to death. Shu‘ayb ﷺ retaliated with a burning statement:

قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَرَأَيْتُمْ لِيَّ عِزٌّ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ  
وَإِذَا أَخَذْتُ مَخْرَجًا لَّيْسَ لِيَّ بِكُمْ حِطٌّ

qāla yā qawmi °arahtī a°azzu °alaykum mina-llāhi  
wa °ittakhafġtumūhu waraakum ḡhihriyyan  
°inna rabbī bima ta°malūna muhīt

He said, 'My people! Do you esteem my clan more than Allāh?  
You made Him something to cast with contentment behind your backs!  
But my Lord encompasses everything that you do!

(Sūrah Ḥud 11:92)

“Is my family of more consideration with you than Allāh ﷻ? and when the Midianites refused to believe, they were destroyed by a mighty earthquake. Allāh ﷻ however, mentions that Shu°ayb ؑ and his believing companions were rescued from the earthquake.

All of this is by way of some background into who this man, Shu°ayb ؑ, was who had invited Mūsā ؑ to his house because of the kindness he had shown his daughters. What was happening in actuality (*ḥaqīqah*) was the meeting of the student, Mūsā ؑ, and his shaykh, and this was how Allāh ﷻ was both answering his fervent supplication (*du°ā*) and setting him on the path of Truth.

To continue with the story: Mūsā ؑ accompanied the two girls and when he entered the house, he introduced himself politely and was invited for dinner and more, for Shu°ayb ؑ, well aware of what was going on, invited Mūsā ؑ to stay with them if he had not place to rest his head. After dinner Mūsā ؑ told his story and Shu°ayb ؑ said to himself: “This person is most certainly from the Family of the °Ambiyā°a (الأنبياء).” Ḥaḡrat Shu°ayb ؑ comforted Mūsā ؑ and told him to relax and not to fear as the jurisdiction of Fir°awn did not extend to this land and he need have no fear of being pursued.

The mode Mūsā ؑ had adopted when drawing the water and then accompanying his daughters testifies to his honesty, righteousness and integrity and Shu°ayb ؑ was elated at the words of his daughter, Saburah.

Shu°ayb ؑ told Mūsā ؑ that it was his intention to marry one of his daughters to him. The condition however was that Mūsā ؑ had to be the shepherd to tend to the sheep and goats for eight years, and, if he, voluntarily agreed – ten years, it would be appreciated.

قَالَ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَنْكِحَكَ إِحْدَى ابْنَتَيَّ هَاتَيْنِ  
عَلَى أَنْ تَأْجُرَنِي ثَمَانِي حَجَاجَ فَإِنْ أُمَمْتُ عَشْرًا  
فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَمْلِكَ عَلَيْكَ سَبْجَدُنِ  
إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ • قَالَ ذَلِكَ نُبَيِّنُكَ  
أَمَّا الْأَجَلُ فَمِنْ قَضِيَّتْ فَلَا عُدْوَانَ عَلَيَّ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ

qāla °innī °urīdu °an °unkihaka °ihḍa °ibnatayya hātayni  
°alā an ta°juranī ṭhamaniya ḥijajin fa°in °atmamta °ashran  
fa-min °indika wa mā °urīdu °an ashuqqa °alayka satajidunī  
°in shā°a-llāhu mina -ṣ-ṣaliḥīn •

qāla dhalika baynee wa baynaka ayyama-l-ajalayni qaḍaytu  
falā °udwāna °alayya wa-llāhu °alā mā naqūlu wakīl

He (Shu°ayb) said,

“I would like to marry you to one of these two daughters of mine  
on condition that you work for me for eight full years.

If you complete ten, it is up to you. I do not want to be hard on you.

You will find me, Allāh willing, to be one of the salīḥūn.” •

(Mūsā) said: “This is (agreed) between you and me.

Whichever term I fulfil, no injustice will be done to me.

Allāh is witness to our agreement.”



When Mūsā ﷺ accepted the terms, Nabī Shu°ayb ﷺ performed the *Nikkah* the same day and as a wedding present presented a Staff (āṣā/عصا) to Mūsā ﷺ. There was much portent in this presentation.

Nabī Shu°ayb ﷺ had in his possession the staffs of seventy Prophets (°ambiyā°a/الأنبياء) ﷺ of bygone times. One of these staffs was the Staff which °Ādām ﷺ had brought with him from the Garden (al-jannah/الجنة). It was a wonderful Staff which had passed from Nabī to Nabī ﷺ until it had been finally inherited by Nabī Shu°ayb ﷺ who is sometimes taken to have been the son of Mikil, the son of Isākḥar, the son of Midian, the son of °Ibrahīm ﷺ.

At the time when Shu°ayb ﷺ received this Staff, he was instructed to present it to the Kalīmullāh (The Word of Allāh), It was a trust (°amānā/أمانة) for the Kalīmullāh (who Mūsā ﷺ turned out to be) but, who at that point, had little conscious awareness of what was actually going on with this simple shepherd’s gift of a staff.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Mūsā ؑ had not yet been appointed to be the Nabi (follow the story) though somewhere inside (as with the coals of fire) he must have known and was aware at some level of understanding the great significance of the Staff and at the same time Nabī Shu'ayb ؑ (who was almost blind by this time in his life) having been informed that this stranger was, indeed, that very Mūsā – Kalīmullāh ؑ.

Nabī Shu'ayb ؑ instructed him to go into a small room where the seventy Staffs were stored and to bring one.

Mūsā ؑ entered the room, took a Staff and presented it to Nabī Shu'ayb ؑ, who being half blind, carefully ran his hand up and down the length of the Staff. He then said: "Oh Son. Return the Staff to its place and bring another one." Mūsā ؑ went into the room, replacing the Staff, but when he attempted to take another staff, the first Staff miraculously leapt up and landed in his hand. He returned to Nabī Shu'ayb ؑ with the Staff. After closely feeling the Staff, he said: "This Staff is of no use for you. Return it to its place, and bring another one." He returned to the room, replacing the Staff. As he attempted to take another staff, the same Staff miraculously jumped up into his hand.

Describing this episode, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ said that this scene was enacted seven times. After the seventh time, again the Staff landed in the hand of Mūsā ؑ. Finally he said to Nabī Shu'ayb ؑ: "Each time I place this Staff apart from the pile of staffs. When I attempt to take another staff, this Staff forcefully leaps into my hand."

Nabī Shu'ayb thought, "What is the mystery? I have to keep this Staff for Kalīmullāh. While he was reflecting the Angel Jibrīl ؑ appeared. The Staff which had been standing on the ground alongside Nabī Shu'ayb ؑ miraculously penetrated four inches into the ground. Jibrīl ؑ said: "Allāh ﷻ has decreed that the Staff belongs to the one who pulls it out from the ground."

Despite Nabī Shu'ayb's ؑ repeated efforts, he was unable to extract the Staff from the ground. After he was exhausted, he said to Mūsā ؑ: "Oh Son! If you are able to pull the Staff from the ground, it will belong to you." Mūsā ؑ retrieved the Staff effortlessly. In fact, the Staff of its own accord jumped into the hand of Mūsā ؑ, which convinced Nabī Shu'ayb's ؑ that this stranger would be appointed the Nabī, Mūsā ؑ Kalīmullāh (= Word of Allāh ﷻ).



## Mūsā ﷺ and the Parting

With extreme delight and happiness, he exclaimed: “Oh Mūsā Kalīmullāh ﷺ! Congratulations! Blessed is this Staff for you. This is no ordinary Staff. It is something wonderful, something special. This Staff will come to your aid in all situations.”



Madian was “a flourishing ancient town with numerous wells and permanently flowing springs whose water had good taste. There were farms, gardens and groves of palm trees.” Mūsā ﷺ was very happy with his wife Safurah (Arabic: Ṣafura or Safrāwa صفورة صوانة) (Greek Σεφωρύρα – Sephora = “bird”), [known as Zipporah in the Book of Exodus. The wife of Mūsā ﷺ, and the daughter of Jethro (Shu‘ayb ﷺ), a priest of Midian]. In any case Mūsā ﷺ took care of the farm and the sheep of Shu‘ayb ﷺ and, perhaps more importantly drank deeply in the city of many springs from the teachings of his father-in-law, and shaykh, Nabī Shu‘ayb ﷺ

There is a story from that time. Nabī Shu‘ayb ﷺ had cautioned Mūsā ﷺ regarding the significance of the Staff of Nabī ‘Ādam ﷺ which had now come into the possession of Mūsā ﷺ.

When Mūsā ﷺ was about to leave with the flock on the first day of his duty, Shu‘ayb ﷺ warned him: “Oh Mūsā! You may take the sheep anywhere to graze, but stay away from a certain location (which he explained). Never go near to that place nor ever turn your face in that direction. It is the abode of an extremely dangerous snake which will harm the sheep.”

When he reached the grazing field, he observed that all the sheep suddenly turned in the direction of the prohibited location. He repeatedly tried to drive them away from that direction, but in vain. They ran wildly towards the forbidden zone. In pursuit of the sheep he came upon the forbidden area, and there observed beautiful lush pastures. The flock were grazing contently and Mūsā ﷺ placing his trust in Allāh ﷻ sat down on a rock and was soon overcome with sleep. When he fell asleep the staff was resting by his head.

As soon as Mūsā ﷺ fell asleep, a snake appeared.

As the snake was about to plunge among the sheep, the Staff of Mūsā ﷺ, by the command of Allāh ﷻ, became a huge serpent and devoured the snake. Immediately after that the Staff assumed its original form and returned to its position alongside Mūsā ﷺ who, when he opened his eyes, saw the bones and blood of a snake nearby.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Bewildered and surprised he looked more closely, and saw his Staff stained with blood. This increased his bewilderment.

In the evening after he returned with the sheep, he narrated the episode to Nabī Shu‘ayb ؑ who, realizing the miraculous powers of the Staff, was immensely pleased.

In his happiness he said to Mūsā ؑ: “This year all rams born to the flock will be for you, and all females will be mine.” That year, only rams were born and the following year, Nabī Shu‘ayb ؑ said to Mūsā ؑ: “Oh Mūsā! This year, all females will be for you, and all rams will be mine.” By the order of Allāh ﷻ only females were born in the flock that year. The third year, Nabī Shu‘ayb ؑ said: “Oh Musa! This year, all sheep born with two colors of wool will be for you, and all born with one colour will be mine.” By the order of Allāh ﷻ that year only two-tone sheep were born. The fourth year, Nabī Shu‘ayb ؑ said: “Oh Musa! This year, all sheep born single colored will be for you, and all sheep with two colours will be mine.” By the order of Allāh ﷻ that year only only single coloured sheep were born.

In this manner ten years passed by. and sheep of Mūsā ؑ numbered in the thousands and Mūsā ؑ, instead of the agreed 10 years, spent wound up spending almost 18 years in Midian in the service of Nabī Shu‘ayb ؑ.

Time passed until Mūsā ؑ began to feel the pull of homesickness. And though he drank deeply from the springs of the teachings of his father in law and shaykh, Nabī Shu‘ayb ؑ, he missed his kith and kin: Maryam his sister, Harūn ؑ and, perhaps most of all, his two mothers: Barkhah his birth mother and ‘Asīyah ؑ his adoptive mother. He began to want to see them while they still lived.

One day he approached Nabī Shu‘ayb ؑ and very humbly and respectfully said: “If you permit me, I wish to make a request.” to which Nabī Shu‘ayb ؑ replied: “Feel free to ask for whatever you wish.” Mūsā ؑ expressed his deep desire to visit his mother and brother, sister and two mothers and also asked if might take with him his wife and Nabī Shu‘ayb’s ؑ beloved daughter, Safurah.

Nabī Shu‘ayb’s ؑ consented with graciousness mixed with sadness saying that Mūsā ؑ had indeed fulfilled his term and more and so it was that Mūsā ؑ set off on the journey with his now pregnant wife, Safurah, on the long eight day camel back trek back to Ægypt.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Ultimately he reached a wilderness which was a journey of three days from Egypt, and here Mūsā ؑ lost the way. Night fell and he was confused and totally lost. It was actually the desert where Jabal (Mt.) Sinai is located. He found himself at the foot of a huge mountain on an intensely dark night – flashes of lighting appeared in the sky and it began to rain heavily. Hailstones were falling. His wife was expecting, and as those things go, wound up giving birth. However, Mūsā ؑ, being who he was, did not panic.

He found a place of refuge in a mountain cave. After settling his wife and the newborn baby in the cave, he set out in search of fire to keep them warm. He struck together stones to create a spark, but in vain. While he was engaged in this exercise, the rain let up and he suddenly saw in the distance a brightly burning fire.

On seeing the fire, he informed his wife, and hurried towards it. As he proceeded, he broke some tree branches which he hoped to use to get a fire going in case it did turn out that what he saw was a fire caused by the lightning. When he finally reached the place where he had seen the fire he was astonished to see a very lush tree.

Despite the flames, not a single leaf of the tree was on fire. Bewildered, he went towards the burning tree to try to light his branches so that he could return to the cave where his wife and newborn child waited. As he stretched his branch towards the flame, it leapt out of his reach. Mūsā ؑ went ahead towards the flame. But again it leapt out of his reach.

Overcome with fear mixed with dread, he stood riveted. The flame increased so much that it reached out to the sky. Then the flame receded and returned to the tree. He now understood that this was no ordinary fire. He was convinced that it was some divine mystery – and a mystery he didn't understand. He decided to leave the place but as he was about to leave, he heard a Divine Voice calling out to him:

إِنِّي أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَاخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى

ʾinnī ʾana rabbuka faikhlaʿ naʿlayka

ʾinnaka bi-l-wadi-l-muqaddasi tuwā

Truly, I am your Rabb!

Take off your sandals, for truly, you are in the holy valley of Tuwā.

(Sūrah Tā Hā 20:12)

## Mūsā ﷺ and the Parting

Here in the Twice Holy Valley of Tuwā Allāh ﷻ appointed Mūsā ﷺ as His Nabī.

أَنَا اخْتَرْتُكَ فَاسْمِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ  
إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي  
إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أَخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا تَسْعَىٰ  
فَلَا يَصُدُّكَ عَنْهَا مَنْ لَابُوسٌ فِيهَا وَاتَّعَىٰ هُوَ الْأَفْتَرْدَىٰ

°āna-kh-tartuka fa °istami° limā yūha  
°innanī °ana-llāhu lā ilaha °illa °anā fa°ubudnī  
wa °aqimi-ṣ-ṣalata li-dhikrī.  
°inna-s-sa°ata °āātiyatun akādu °ukhfīha  
li tujzā kullu nafsīn bimā tas°a  
falā yaṣuddannaka °anhā man lā yu°minu bihā  
wa °ittaba°a hawahu fatarda

I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed.  
I am Allah. There is no deity but Me, so worship Me  
and establish salat [in order] to remember Me.  
The Hour is coming but I have concealed it  
so that every self can be repaid for its efforts.

Do not let those who have no iman  
and follow their whims and desires jeep you from it  
or you will be destroyed.

(Sūrah Tā Hā 20:13-16)

Next the the Divine Voice asked Mūsā ﷺ: “What is that in your right hand?” Mūsā ﷺ replied: “It is my staff. I lean on it and with it I break leaves from trees for my animals, and for me there are other uses too in the staff.” The Divine Voice said: “Throw it down.” After he threw the staff on the ground, Mūsā ﷺ in astonishment saw that the staff had been transformed into a huge snake – the sight of which overwhelmed him with fear – and he turned and began to flee. Allāh ﷻ commanded him:

خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا الْأُولَىٰ

khudhha wa lā takhaf sanu°īduhā sīrataha-l-°ūla

“Grab it and fear not!. We will return it to its original form.”

(Sūrah Tā Hā 20:21)

As soon as Mūsā ﷺ touched the snake, it changed back to the staff.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Allāh ؑ then ordered him to insert his hand in his garment and place it under his armpit. He did as commanded.

Remember here that the hand of Mūsā ؑ had been badly burned when, in order to offset the fears of Fir°awn, he had grabbed the hot goals from the fire. Now when he withdrew his hand, it glowed briefly and then was completely restored to its original condition.

Allāh ؑ then instructed him to proceed to Fir°awn and to invite him to °Imān (faith) and to set free Bani Israel whom Fir°awn had enslaved.

Here Mūsā ؑ balked, for although his hand had now been healed, he still had a speech impediment as a result of putting the same coal in his mouth and also he could not quite see how he could speak to Fir°awn in a way that he would understand him or that he could make himself clear. Therefore he said to Allāh ؑ

رَبِّ اشْخِصْ لِي صَدْرِي • وَيسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي • وَاحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِنْ لِسَانِي • يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

rabbi °ishrahli šadrī, wa yassir li amrī,  
wa°h-lul °uqdatan min lisanī, yafqahū qawlī

“My Lord open my heart, make things easy,  
untie the knot from my tongue, so they can understand me.  
(Sūrah Tā Hā 20:25-28)

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَذِّبُونِ  
وَيَضِيقُ صَدْرِي وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِي فَأَرْسِلْ إِلَى هَارُونَ

qala rabbi °innī °akḥafu °an yukadḥhibūni  
wa yaḍīqu šadreī wa lā yaṇṭaliqu lisanī fa °arsil °ila harūn

He said: My Lord! Lo! I fear that they will deny me, •  
and that my heart will be constricted and my tongue will not be free,  
therefore send for Harūn (to help me).  
(Sāratu-l-Shu°arah 10-13)



Mūsā ؑ also professed his fear of being imprisoned by Fir°awn and mentioned the incident of the Copt whom he had killed. He feared that Fir°awn would have him tortured and killed but Allāh ؑ instructed him not to fear. and ordered that they both should go to Fir°awn and announce their *Nubuwwat* (Prophethood).





After his communion with Allāh ﷻ ended, Mūsā ؑ returned from the mountain and went to the valley where he had left his wife who had, after all, just given birth. When he reached the place, he was astonished to observe a number of strange women engaged in serving his wife. They explained that they were from among the Women of the Garden (*ḥūrīyah*/حورية). Finding his wife in excellent state, and under the protection of Allāh ﷻ, Nabī Mūsā ؑ was overcome with gratitude and happiness.

He announced to his wife that Allāh ﷻ had appointed him as a Nabī and has commanded him to go to Fir°awn. He said: “I now assign you to the care of Allāh ﷻ but for safety for you and the new baby I shall proceed alone to the city to deliver the Message to Fir°awn.” His wife, having witnessed the wonderful and miraculous decrees of Allāh ﷻ, gave her wholehearted consent, confident that Allāh ﷻ would care for her and the baby. She said: “Oh Mūsā! Discharging the command of Allāh ﷻ is of utmost and prior importance. Make haste towards your destiny.” After all, she was the daughter of Nabī Shu°ayb’s ؑ.

Very soon after Nabī Mūsā ؑ set off in the direction of Egypt, a caravan returning from Egypt to Median happened to pass by the spot where his wife was. Recognizing her, they took her and delivered her to her father, Nabī Shu°ayb ؑ, in Midian.



Nabī Mūsā ؑ now hastened on his journey. Even so when he reached Egypt, it was late at night. He went straight to his mother’s home. When he knocked at the door, his very aged mother asked: “Who is it?” He responded: “I am a traveller.” His aged mother opened the door, and welcomed him in, not realizing who he was. She immediately made preparations for a meal for the traveller. While Nabī Mūsā ؑ was busy eating, his brother, Hārūn (هارون) ؑ entered. Seeing Mūsā ؑ, he asked his mother: “Who’s he?” She said: “He is a poor wayfarer who is our guest tonight.” Hārūn ؑ, welcoming the ‘traveller’, said: “Brother, regard this as your own house. Eat, relax and rest here.”

Hārūn ؑ found himself looking very intently at the ‘traveller’ and was mystified. There was something – something familiar – which drew him irresistibly to the ‘traveller’. But he maintained silence.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

After a few moments, Mūsā ؑ, breaking the silence, said: “Why are you staring at me so intently? I am your brother, Mūsā.” Pandemonium followed. Brother, mother and sister with tears of delight and joy embraced Mūsā ؑ. When the situation came back to some degree of normality, Mūsā ؑ narrated his recent history, the years with Nabī Shu‘ayb ؑ, his marriage to Safurah and his new born child and, most importantly, the events in the desert and the spectacle of the burning tree where the *Nubuwwat* had been bestowed on both him and his beloved brother, Hārūn ؑ.

It was truly an °Eid in their home.

Mūsā ؑ said: “Oh my Brother! It is now not the time to remain in the house. Nubuwwat has been conferred on you so that you can help guide people to the Path of Righteousness.” Then they set off to the palace of Fir‘awn and when the two arrived at the palace they found that Fir‘awn was in sitting in session in his court which was packed with courtiers and the nobility.

Hārūn ؑ was fearful, even though, as a result of his years in the schools of Fir‘awn, he was an highly accomplished public speaker and deeply learned man. He told Mūsā ؑ that the oppression and cruelty of Fir‘awn had increased many times over since he had fled Egypt. At the slightest provocation or suspicion he would order the hands and feet of people to be cut off and without hesitation he would order people to be impaled on the gibbet. The grim portrayal of Fir‘awn’s oppression by Hārūn ؑ made Mūsā ؑ fearful too for after all Fir‘awn was regarded not only as the King of Egypt, owner of all the lands, high priest be he was also a ‘god’. There was literally no one who had any say regarding any decision Fir‘awn made. He was what we would call today an absolute ruler.

A word or two here about Hārūn ؑ whom we have only spoken of peripherally.

Hārūn ؑ was a very gifted speaker and was largely responsible with teaching the Israelites the way of worship as it was laid out in the Torah of the time. Indeed it was Mūsā ؑ (fearful always of his speech impeding) who asked Allāh ﷻ to “send my brother Hārūn with me as helper for he is more fluent than I with words, that he should affirm me, for I fear they would call me a liar.” (Q28:34) and Allāh ﷻ had granted Mūsā ؑ his request and told him that he could take his brother along with him, saying,

قَالَ سَنَشُدُّ عَضُدَكَ بِأَخِيكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكَ مُلْكًا سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَصِلُونَ إِلَيْكَ مَا بَاتُوا  
أَنْتُمْ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكُمْ الْعَالِيُونَ

qala sanashuddu °aḍudaka bi-°akhīka  
wa naj°alu lakumā sultānan fa lā yaṣilūna °ilaykuma bi-°āyatinā  
°āntumā wa mani °ittaba°akuma-l-ghālibūn

He said, 'We will strengthen your arm with your brother  
and by Our Signs will give you both authority,  
so that they will not be able to lay a hand on you.  
You and those who follow you will be the victors.'

(Sūratu-l-Qaṣaṣ 28:35)

Hārūn ؑ, being a prophetic messenger, was also given the law by Allāh ﷻ, to preach to the Bani Israel according to the Torah. Allāh ﷻ mentions in the Qur°ān the holy scripture as a light and guidance for those who would accept the Message.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَهَارُونَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَاءً وَذِكْرًا لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

wa laqad °ātayna mūsā wa hārūna-l-furqāna  
wa ḍiyā°an wa ḍhikran li-l-muttaqīna

We gave Moses and Aaron the Criterion,  
and a light and reminder for those who take heed for themselves,  
(Sūratu-l-°Ambiyā 21:48)

I hope to write a second part to this account in which I will, °inshallāh, be able to give a full account of the mis-understood story of Hārūn ؑ and the Golden Calf and the evil figure of Samiri, but that will have to wait for that opportunity to present itself.

But one other thing should help the reader/listener to understand the figure of Hārūn a bit better which is in the account of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ who, speaking of the beauty of Yūsuf ؑ when he saw him on his Night Jouney, compares him to Hārūn ؑ.

Muḥammad ﷺ also mentions him in likeness to °Alī ؑ. who the Prophet ﷺ left to look after his family at the beginning of the Hijra.

The hypocrites of the time begun to spread the rumor that the Prophet ﷺ found °Alī ؑ a burden and had left him in Makkah and was relieved to be rid of his presence. °Alī ؑ, grieved at hearing this taunt, told Muḥammad ﷺ what the local people has said. In reply, the Prophet ﷺ said:



“They lie, I asked you to remain for the sake of what I had left behind me. So return and represent me in my family and in yours. Are you not content, Oh °Alī, that you should be unto me as Hārūn was to Mūsā, save that after me there is no prophet. (Ibn Ishaq, *Biography of the Prophet* ﷺ, 897)

To continue: while the two were overwhelmed by fear upon entering the court of the Fir°awn, the Angel Jibrīl ؑ appeared and after conveying peace (*salām*/سلام) from Allāh ﷻ, he gave the revelation:

قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا إِنِّي مَعَكُمَا أَسْمِعُ وَأُبْرِئُ  
فَأْتِيَاهُ فَقُولَا إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ  
وَلَا تَعْدُبْهُمْ قَدْ جِئْنَاكَ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدَى  
qāla lā takhāfā °innanī ma°akumāā °āsmā°u wa °āra •  
fa°tiyāhu faqūla °innā rasūla rabbika fa-°arsil ma°anā banī °isrā°ila  
wa lā tu°adhdhibhum qad ji°nāka bi-°āyatin mir-rabbika  
wa-s-salāmu °ala mani ittaba°a-l-hudā

He said, “Both of you, do not fear, I am with you. I hear and I see.

Go both of you to him, and say:

“Truly, we are the Messengers of your Lord,  
therefore, send with us Banī °Isrā°īl and do not torture them.  
Truly, we have come to you with a sign from your Creator,  
And peace on those who follow the guidance (of Allah).

(Sūrah Ṭa Hā 20:46-47)



Immediately on receiving this Revelation (*waḥī*/وحى) Mūsā ؑ and Hārūn ؑ stood up and without any fear proceeded to Fir°awn. and when they were in the presence of Fir°awn, Mūsā ؑ very loudly proclaimed that he was the appointed Messenger (rasūl/رَسُول) of Allāh ﷻ and delivered the divine message. Mūsā ؑ added: “Oh Fir°awn! If you reject this Message, the wrath and punishment of Allāh ﷻ will surely overtake you.”

Astounded by the sudden appearance of Mūsā ؑ after so many years, and his temerity, Fir°awn, scrutinizing him with searching eyes, interrupted, him to say, “Yā Mūsā You are the one whom I have nourished. You lived many years under my roof and then you paid me back by killing one of my guards and fled, fearing execution, and now after 18 years you come to me like this?

## Mūsā ﷺ and the Parting

Nabī Mūsā ﷺ replied, “I was not aware that your guard would die from a single blow of my fist. His death was accidental. Allāh ﷻ has forgiven me. I left here fearing your wrath and I lived in the Land of Madyan where Allāh ﷻ bestowed His bounties on me beyond counting and on my way back, He ﷻ most graciously bestowed the *Nubuwwat* on me in the twice blessed Valley of Tuwā near the Mountain of Tūr.”

After this Nabī Mūsā ﷺ reiterated the message of Allāh Ta‘ala.

Awed by the address, Fir‘awn asked, “And who exactly is *your* Lord, oh Mūsā? Nabī Mūsā ﷺ replied that “...it is He who has created both you and I and the entire creation and it is He Who guides all things in their being and to their ends.”

Mockingly, Fir‘awn said, “And what if I accept your Rabb, what will He give me?” Nabī Mūsā ﷺ replied, “He will give three things to you: perpetual youth, sovereignty of the world, and He will increase your life span by another hundred years.”

When Fir‘awn heard these wonderful awards, he mellowed a bit and said, “Go now, and return tomorrow. Let me first consult with my advisors.” Mūsā and Hārūn ﷺ left and returned home.

The awards promised by Nabī Mūsā ﷺ were very attractive and tempting and Fir‘awn became very restless. He called together his council of ministers and expressed his desire for perpetual youth. Hāmān (هَامَانَ), his chief minister, referring to Mūsā as a sorcerer and a liar said, “Have you so quickly fallen prey to the promises of Mūsā?” and thereby Hāmān convinced Fir‘awn to reject the offer of Nabī Mūsā ﷺ.

The next day when Mūsā and Hārūn ﷺ returned, Fir‘awn mockingly asked, “Show me the proof of your *Nubuwwat*? On what basis should I believe you are an appointed Messenger of the Creator?” As Fir‘awn was speaking, Nabī Mūsā ﷺ cast down his Staff. A mighty fearsome serpent appeared with its mouth wide open. Its lower jaw was on the ground and its upper jaw scraped the ceiling.

The scene was set for the snake to swallow Fir‘awn, his throne and the entire palace.

There was absolute pandemonium in the palace. Everyone was running and screaming. Fir‘awn himself came down from his throne looking for an escape route.

Describing this scene, Rasullullah ﷺ said that several hundred of Fir'awn's men were killed in the ensuing mad stampede. Everyone was dashing madly to escape from the giant serpent. Fir'awn, while running, cried out hysterically, "Yā Mūsā! By that One God Who has appointed you the Messenger, I implore you to save us all from destruction. I believe in you and I shall release Banī 'Isrā'īl. They are free to go with you." Taking pity on Fir'awn who had, after all, raised him, educated him and given him a life of ease, Nabī Mūsā ﷺ placed his hand on the head of the snake, and in a flash it was transformed back into what it appeared to be; a shepherd's staff.

Everyone was shuddering, dumbstruck and in total confusion. Fir'awn remounted and took his position on the throne, and said almost affectionately: "Yā Mūsā! You have demonstrated a most frightful thing. Now show us something beautiful." at which Nabī Mūsā ﷺ inserted his hand in his garment under his arm and when he removed it, it shone like the sun — the same hand which had burnt when as a child he had placed his hand in the burning embers.

Profoundly impressed by the two miracles (*mu'jizah*/معجزة) of Nabī Mūsā ﷺ, Fir'awn now said to his ministers and courtiers, "Is there any reason why I should now refuse accepting Mūsā's message and accepting his Religion (*dīn*)?"

There was complete silence in the court of Fir'awn.

Fir'awn was on the verge of accepting the Way of Tawhīd (توحيد), when Hāmān spoke out, "What?! What has happened to your intelligence? Do'nt you understand that in his 18 year absence, Mūsā has acquired expert proficiency in the science of magic (*sihr*/سحر) and with this magic he is plotting to overthrow you."

"My advice as your first minister is to assemble the expert magicians from all over the land to confront him, and only then should you ask our view regarding your intention of embracing the Way of Mūsā. Take care, sir, for what he suggests undermines our whole way of life and being and the way of those who have gone before."

Once again Fir'awn was convinced by the correctness of Hāmān's advice and cancelled his intention of accepting the Way of Tawhīd.

At once orders were issued to summon all the expert magicians from every part of the country to appear in the court of Fir'awn, and soon sorcerers, soothsayers and magicians began arriving in great numbers at the palace.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Among them there were two brothers who were famous magicians. They were from the town of Sa'idiyyah in the south of Ægypt. When Fir'awn's men approached them with the royal summons, they were hesitant. They had already heard about Mūsā ؑ and his miraculous staff and were apprehensive. They asked the messengers to wait while they went into consultation with their aged mother who was also an expert magician. The two sorcerers requested their mother to accompany them to the grave of their father. When the three reached the grave, the mother, employing her magic, addressed her dead husband. When the inmate of the grave spoke, one of the sons explained the purpose of their mission. The father's voice from the grave informed them that all the magicians of the world would be defeated by Mūsā ؑ and that his Staff changing into a deadly serpent was not an act of magic but a Divine Miracle.

Despite this message the two experts together with 72 of their students who were all qualified sorcerers responded to the summons of Fir'awn, and when they arrived at the palace they found thousands of sorcerers from all over Egypt had already assembled. Four sorcerers who were the most famous and the best qualified were selected to lead the thousands of other magicians. The two brothers were included in the four who would be pitted against Nabī Mūsā ؑ.

According to what Allāh ﷻ has revealed in the Qur'ān, Fir'awn had promised the sorcerers huge sums of wealth and high positions of proximity to him if they were able to best Nabī Mūsā ؑ. Fear of Fir'awn and the desire to be at the foremost among the thousands of sorcerers had seduced the two brothers into the arena.

The day for the confrontation, which coincided with one of the national days of celebration in Ægypt, was announced. According to some narrations it was the Day of 'Ashura (or what would have been the 10th of Muḥarram in our calendar). Thousands of people from all parts of the country and from even beyond assembled to witness the event. It was a great and tumultuous occasion. A huge stadium had been erected and Fir'awn surrounded by his noblemen was seated on a throne in an elevated place. The thousands of sorcerers marched in to the stadium – prostrating at the throne of Fir'awn. The awe-inspiring scene of thousands of sorcerers in their splendid colourful robes had greatly boosted the morale of Fir'awn.

He and Hāmān and the rest of his men were all in high spirits. They were convinced that Mūsā ؑ would be defeated and humiliated.

When all the sorcerers were in the arena standing in ranks, the announcement was made for Mūsā ؑ to present himself.

Nabī Mūsā ؑ, attired in a simple black woollen tunic, appeared in the arena with his brother Hārūn ؑ. These two mendicants were a pitiful sight in front of the thousands of sorcerers. When they faced the sorcerers, a group advanced from their ranks and exclaimed, “Oh Musa! Will you begin to cast your staff or shall we begin?” Nabī Mūsā ؑ responded, “You throw first.”

The thousands of magicians, with signs of their hands, fingers and eyes, transformed their thousands of rods, staffs, wands, swords and spears into serpents and huge scorpions. An ocean of slithering serpents, scorpions, crocodiles and other saurian creatures appeared. It was indeed a fearful sight. As far as the eyes could see, there were only frightening creatures. The thousands of spectators screamed in terror. Describing this event, Allāh ﷻ says:

فَلَمَّا أَسْحَرُوا عَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاسْتَرْهَبُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِخْرِ عَظِيمٍ

falammā-l-qaw saḥarū a<sup>o</sup>yuna-n-nasi  
wa <sup>o</sup>istarhabūhum wa jā<sup>o</sup>ū bi-siḥrin <sup>o</sup>aḍḥīm

And when they threw down [their staffs],  
they cast a spell upon the people's eyes,  
and struck them with awe, and produced mighty sorcery.

(Sūratu-l-<sup>o</sup>Ar<sup>o</sup>āf, 7: 116)

With their illusions, the magicians of Fir<sup>o</sup>awn won the public over. They exalted his regime by the spells they performed, which they did “by the might of the Fir<sup>o</sup>awn,” who in turn provided them financial benefits – a mutually beneficial relationship.

In their confrontation with Mūsā ؑ, the magicians were completely aware that Fir<sup>o</sup>awn was not in possession of any kind of divine power. However, purely out of a desire to be brought “close” to enjoy the resulting benefits, they threw their staffs quite sure of their superiority over Muṣa, which they expressed thus:

وَقَالُوا بَعْزُ فِرْعَوْنَ أَذَلَّنَا الْغَالِبُونَ

wa qalū bi<sup>o</sup>izzati fir<sup>o</sup>awna <sup>o</sup>inna lanahnu-l-ghālibūn

“By the might of Pharaoh we are the winners.”

(Sūratu-sh-Ṣhu<sup>o</sup>arā<sup>o</sup> 26: 44)

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

We cannot easily dismiss the magicians of Fir°awn who were authorities on subjects ranging from astronomy to medicine but, as with many of the scientists of the present time, they exploited their knowledge to influence the public and to reinforce the oppressive rule of Fir°awn. And, although deceitful, the magic show wowed the crowd. The people were both impressed and terrified. Mūsā ؑ too was impressed; his heart was filled with fear since the magicians' ropes and staffs also appeared to him slithering about his legs. Allāh ﷻ reminded Nabī Mūsā ؑ not to be frightened:

فَأَوْجَسَ فِي نَفْسِهِ خِيفَةً مُوسَى • قُلْنَا لَا خِفْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْأَعْلَى •  
وَالْقِيَامَ فِي يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوا إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا كَيْدٌ سَاحِرٌ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَى

fa°awjasa fī nafsīhi khīfatan mūsā •

qulna lā taḥhaf °innaka aṅta-l-a°la •

wa °alqi mā fī yamīnika talqaf mā ṣana°ū

°innamā ṣana°ū kaydu sāḥirin wa lā yufliḥu-s-sāḥiru hayṭhu °ata

Musa experienced in himself a feeling of alarm.

We said, "Have no fear. You will have the upper hand.

Throw down what is in your right hand.

It will swallow up their handiwork.

Their handiwork is just a magician's trick.

Magicians do not prosper wherever they go."

(Sūrah Ṭa Hā 20:67-69)

Shored up by this reminder from Allāh ﷻ, Nabī Mūsā ؑ immediately turned to the magicians, telling them their performance was mere sorcery which would be rendered void by the will of Allāh ﷻ:

فَلَمَّا الْقَوْأَالَ مُوسَى مَا جِئْتُمْ بِهِ السِّحْرُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَيُظِلُّهُنَّ  
اللَّهُ لَا يَصْلُحُ عَمَلُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

falammā °alqaw qāla mūsā mā ji°tum bihi-s-siḥru

°inna-llāha sayubṭiluhu °inna-llāha lā yuṣliḥu °amala-l-mufsidīn

When they had thrown, Mūsā said,

"What you have brought is magic.

Allāh will certainly prove it false.

Allāh does not uphold the actions of corrupters."

(Sūrah Yunūs 10: 81)

Then Nabī Mūsā ؑ threw down *his* staff.

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَأْفِكُونَ  
فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ فَغُلِبُوا هُنَالِكَ وَانْقَلَبُوا صَاغِرِينَ

wa °awḥaynā °ila mūsā °ān alqī °aṣāka

fa °idḥa hiya talqafu mā yā °fikūn •

fawaqa °a-l-ḥaqqu wabaṭala ma kanū ya °malūn •

fa-ghuliboo hunālika wa °inqalabū ṣāghirīn

We revealed to Musa, “Throw down your staff.”

And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged.

So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false.  
They were defeated then and there, transformed into humbled men.

(Sūratu-l-A °rāf 7: 117-119)

The heart of Mūsā ؑ was inspired with confidence. As he threw his Staff instantaneously there appeared such a gigantic serpent which no one had ever seen. The sight of the serpent of Nabī Mūsā ؑ sent chills of fear down the spine of Fir°awn. According to the narrations, when the serpent opened its mouth, it was 120 feet wide. The huge fangs were each at least ten feet. Its eyes were like huge flames of fire. The first act of this miraculous monster was to raise its mouth towards the sky, then bring its head down in prostration (*sajdah*) to Allāh ﷻ, The One, Who has no partner.

After its prostration, the mighty serpent moved like a dark storm. It opens its mouth and with two or three gulps it swallowed the thousands of serpents and scorpions fabricated by the sorcerers. It continued until the field in front of it was bare. The magic of the sorcerers had utterly disappeared with an amazing alacrity.

Unlike the illusory tricks of magicians, Nabī Mūsā ؑ worked a real miracle by his Staff. The magicians had plotted against Mūsā ؑ. However, Allāh ﷻ, the best of planners, aided Nabī Mūsā ؑ with a plan which rendered their tricks utterly worthless. Thus, the plots of the magicians only worked against them. Provided with supernatural properties by Allāh ﷻ, the Staff of Nabī Shu°ayb ؑ from the tree of the Garden effected a true miracle.

Consequently, contrary to what people expected, Nabī Mūsā ؑ defeated the magicians.

Everybody witnessed that promise of Allāh ﷻ was true, which is what Allāh ﷻ had ordered him to do at the Valley of Tuwā.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Allāh ؑ did not abandon Mūsā ؑ and, through this miracle, made him victorious over one of the most powerful systems and people of his time.

After eliminating the serpents and scorpions, the Serpent of Nabī Mūsā ؑ turned its gaze towards Firʿawn and his army. There was panic and pandemonium. The panic-stricken Firʿawn screamed in terror and pleaded with Mūsā ؑ to grab his Serpent; and since his mission was only to defeat the sorcerers and to demonstrate the triumph of the Truth over the False he placed his hand on the serpent, which instantaneously once again transformed into the Staff.

The sorcerers and the magicians were the first to understand the manifestation of the Truth. They all fell down in prostration (*sajdah* سجدة) proclaiming their belief in Allāh ؑ and the truth brought by Nabī Mūsā ؑ. It was a wonderful sight. Thousands of sorcerers prostrating to Allāh ؑ and exclaiming,

أَمَّا رَبِّ هَارُونَ وَمُوسَىٰ

ʾāmanna bi rabbi hārūna wa mūsā

“We believe in the Lord (Rabb) of Hārūn and Mūsā.”

(Sūrah Ṭa Hā 20:71)

They specifically mentioned the names of the two Prophets ؑ to make clear to Firʿawn that the prostration was not for him, who in his anger bellowed,

قَالَ أَمْ نُمِثُّ لَكَ قَبْلَ أَنْ أَدْنِيَ لَكُمُ

qala ʾāmañtum lahu qabla ʾan ʾadhñana lakum

“Do you believe in him before I have permitted you?”

(Sūrah Ṭa Hā 20:72)

And went on to accusing them all of having learnt magic from Mūsā ؑ and having conspired with and being in a conspiracy with him and went on to threaten them, to nail them to trees and cut off their hands and feet. According to some tafsīr narrations, 80,000 sorcerers accepted the Way of Tawhīd on that day. All of them prostrated to Allāh ؑ in defiance of Firʿawn and when he threatened to nail them to trees and cut off their hands and feet, they said in unison,

فَاقْضِ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ

faʾiqḍi mā aña qāḍin

“decree whatever you wish to decree

“(Sūrah Ṭa Hā 20:72)



“In any case we shall surely be returning to our Lord.” “We have found the truth”, said the magicians, “and we have realized that Mūsā ؑ is the Prophet sent by Allāh ﷻ the Creator of the world, and we believe in Allāh ﷻ and we have been freed from slavery to you. We are not afraid of being killed. Do whatever you want, for we are not afraid of death. You can only end our worldly lives, and you have no power over our lives in the Hereafter. After our deaths we will be in the world of the Hereafter where we will be blessed with the gifts of our Lord. And in the Hereafter Allāh ﷻ will give us the rewards.”

The threats of Firʿawn had no effect on them at all. Allāh ﷻ had transformed all those sorcerers instantaneously and at one moment into true Knowers of Allāh (عـرفـيـن/ʿārifīn) and His Friends (ʿawliyāʿullāh/أولياء الله). Jannatu-l-Firdous (الجنة الفردوس) was shown to them and for all of this they said to Firʿawn,

فَأَقْضَ مَا أَنْتَ قَاضٍ

faʾiqḍi mā ańta qāḍin

“decree whatever you wish to decree”

(Sūrah Ṭa Hā 20:72)

Firʿawn issued orders for the execution of the sorcerers. Their hands and feet were cut off and they were nailed to trees.

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

ʾālā ʾinna ʾawliyāʿallāhi lā khāwfun ʿalayhim wa lā hum yahzanūn

“Behold!

Verily on the Friends of Allah there is no fear nor shall they grieve”

(Sūrah Yunus 10:62)

The grief-stricken Mūsā ؑ was shedding tears profusely when he beheld the scene of this brutality. But he was helpless. Without the command of Allāh ﷻ he could not utilize the Staff at will. *Muʿjizāh* or Miracles are rare exceptions and not the rule or the norm of earthly life. The celestial veils were removed and Nabī Mūsā ؑ was shown the wonderful and lofty status of the souls of the sorcerers. The soul of every sorcerer who was killed had taken up its abode under the Divine ʿArsh (عرش) in a wonderful celestial form of indescribable beauty which brought solace to his heart

Besides the sorcerers and magicians a group of other Qibtiyyah had also accepted the Way. But they too were very fearful of Firʿawn.

Nevertheless, with the encouragement of Nabī Mūsā ؑ, they persevered and began to worship Allāh ﷻ in their homes. When Firʿawn was informed that the followers of Mūsā ؑ had constructed prayer rooms and were worshipping Allāh ﷻ he ordered the houses be demolished and at the same time his persecution and oppression of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl increased while Mūsā ؑ continued to impart the lesson of repentance and patience to his people.

Firʿawn's oppression and tyranny did not exempt even his wife, Lady ʾAsīyah ؑ. She had accepted the Way of Tawhīd in secret with both Barkhah ؑ, the mother of Mūsā ؑ and also Hārūn ؑ.

She had accepted the Way after Firʿawn had tortured and brutally killed the wife of his treasurer who had concealed his own ʾImān for a hundred years. His name was Kḥarbīl bin Nawhabīl. He had met the companions of the companions of Nabī Yūsuf ؑ. which made him a Tābiʿī of Nabī Yūsuf ؑ. He and his wife were both believers (muʾminūn). His wife was the lady in waiting of the daughter of Firʿawn. Once while she was combing the girl's hair, the comb slipped from her hand and saying "Bismillāh" she had picked it up. The daughter of Firʿawn was stunned by this exclamation and asked, "Is there another god besides my father?"

Kḥarbīl's wife, the lady in waiting, said: "My G-d, the G-d of your father and the G-d of the heavens and the earth is the One G-d Who has no partners." The princess reported to her father what had happened, and Firʿawn summoned Kḥarbīl's wife and demanded an explanation. She repeated what she had said to his daughter. Then Firʿawn ordered her to renounce the Dīn of Tawhīd which she emphatically refused to do. Then began the process of torture.

Four steel spikes were driven through her body and she was impaled on the ground. Snakes and scorpions were let loose on to her. She was then ordered again to renounce ʾImān and she would be set free. But she refused. Next her infant son was brought and slaughtered on top of her. As the baby's soul (rūḥ/روح) took flight, it said to its mother, "Oh my Mother! Patience! Patience (ṣabr, ṣabr)."

Lady ʾAsīyah ؑ had witnessed this brutality and by the permission of Allāh ﷻ had heard the soul of the baby speaking to its mother. This was the episode which led to her deep acceptance of The Way and led to an even worse problem for, when Firʿawn discovered that his wife had embraced the Way of Mūsā ؑ, he was totally enraged.

He summoned her into his presence and interrogated her. She said, “Oh Fir°awn! You have become the most contemptible and most despicable person in creation, one who tortures and kills the innocent.” Fir°awn said, “It appears that the insanity of your maid has afflicted you.” Lady °Asīyah ؑ replied, “There is no insanity afflicting me. Verily, my G-d, her G-d, your G-d and the G-d of the heavens and the earth is but the One G-d Who has no partner.”

Fir°awn tore her garments and struck her. He sent for her parents to admonish her but even the pleading of her parents had no effect on °Asīyah ؑ. who continued resolutely to proclaim the *Kalimah Tawhīd* (The Words of Unity/كلمة توحيد). Then Fir°awn tried to tempt her saying, “I shall build for you a palace of gold and silver and bestow great wealth on you. But I warn you that if you refuse and keep to the the Way of Mūsā, I shall have you skinned alive.”

°Imān however was now firmly entrenched in her heart and the degree of her certainty (*yaqīn*/يقين) made her Faith unshakeable. She fearlessly said, “Oh Fir°awn! I have no need of your gold and silver palace and wealth for in the Garden my Lord has promised me palaces of rubies and pearls. Why should I fear your fire since my Lord has prepared for me lush orchards and cool rivers. Since all these bounties and more beyond imagining have been prepared for me so why should I worship a cruel angry being such as you when the Love of my Lord passes all understanding?”

Now Fir°awn’s rage finally totally overwhelmed him. He summoned the executioner and ordered, “Undress this woman, then skin her alive; then lay her prostrate on the ground and knock spikes through her body. Place a huge tray of fire on her breast.”

When the torture began, Lady °Asīyah ؑ supplicated,

رَبِّ ابْنِ لِي عِنْدَكَ بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَخِّنِي مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَخِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ

rabbi °ibni lī °indaka baytan fi-l-jannati wa najjini min fir°awna wa °amalīhi wa najjini mina-l-qawmi-dh-dhhalimīn

“My Lord! Build for me, in nearness to You, a house in the Garden,  
and save me from Pharaoh and his doings,  
and save me from those that do wrong”

(Sūrat-t-Taḥrīm 66:11)

Then Allāh ﷻ removed all veils and showed her the Garden and unravelled such spiritual mysteries and His Proximity to her, that the torture became delight.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

This is the Power (*qudrah*/قُدْرَة) of Allāh ﷻ. Just as Nabī °Ibrāhīm ؑ found the fire of Nimrod to be a cool and gracious garden, so too did Lady °Asīyah ؑ find the terrible torture of Fir°awn. Her joyous laughter mystified and perplexed him and he approached and asked her the reason for her ‘insane’ laughter while she was undergoing such terrible punishment. She told him, “O Evil One! Get away from me. You can never understand the joy and delight of Divine Proximity which I am right now experiencing.”

Frustrated and angered beyond limit, Fir°awn finally ordered a huge boulder to be placed on her to crush her to death. As the boulder was being lowered on her, her gracious soul (*rūh*/روح) took flight from her earthly body and returned to the Divine Proximity.

I love the whole world, for the whole world is of Him.

The love of the abode did not infatuate me,  
But the love of the One who resides therein.



Meanwhile the advisers and henchmen of Fir°awn were goading him to kill Nabī Mūsā ؑ. Narrating their mischief, Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur°ān.

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِن قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَدْرُسُوْنَ وَقَوْمُ ثِيَفِ وَإِنِ الْأَرْضُ  
وَيَذَرُكَ وَالْهَيْكَلُ قَالَ سَتَقْتُلُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَتَسْخَبِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا فَوْقَهُمْ قَاهِرُونَ

wa qala-l-mala°u min qawmi fir°awna  
°atadharu mūsā wa qawmahu liyufsidu fi-l-°arḍi  
wa yadharaka wa °alihataka qala sanuqattilu abnā°ahum  
wa nastaḥyī nisā°ahum wa °inna fawqahum qāhīrūn

The ruling circle of Pharaoh’s people said,  
‘Are you going to let Musa and his people cause corruption in the land  
and abandon you and your gods?’

He said, ‘We will kill their sons and let their women live.

We have absolute power over them!’

(Sūratu-l-A°rāf 7:127)

The ‘gods’ mentioned in this Qur°aanic °āyat were the idols, the smaller gods while Fir°awn had elevated himself to be the ‘great god’. They advised Fir°awn to have Nabī Mūsā ؑ put to death. but Fir°awn, however, said to himsel, “It is not possible to kill Musa nor to capture him.” To placate his people, he said, “We shall kill all their sons and leave alive all their women.” He assured his people that he would prevail over Mūsā ؑ and, indeed, all of Banī °Isrā°īl.

Although Fir<sup>c</sup>awn was at this time not inclined to again initiate a mass slaughter of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl, he was pressurized by his people to unleash a reign of terror. Thousands of the boy children of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl were once again slaughtered so that Banī ʾIsrāʾīl was overwhelmed with grief. They came complaining to Nabī Mūsā ؑ, wailing and pouring out their hearts, They cried and said, “Oh Mūsā! We were persecuted before you came to us and since you have come to us from Madyan and Tūwā, the persecution has increased. Thousands of babies have been torn from their mothers breasts and have been put to death.” Nabī Mūsā ؑ was overwhelmed with grief and wept profusely. In this state of grief he entered his place of worship and supplicated to Allāh ﷻ Who accepted his supplication, and then set in motion a series of punishments which overtook Fir<sup>c</sup>awn and all his nation.

The very moment Nabī Mūsā ؑ invoked the curse of Allāh ﷻ on Fir<sup>c</sup>awn and his people, the heavens became intensely dark. Within a short time the whole of Egypt as engulfed in darkness. A fierce storm erupted with cyclones and rains lashing the country for seven days destroying the houses of the Qibtiyyah and killing thousands of the people of Fir<sup>c</sup>awn in this mighty rain storm to the point that their bodies were floating in heaps on the floodwaters.

At the same time Allāh ﷻ demonstrated His Qudrah by protecting Banī ʾIsrāʾīl; their homes remained untouched and not a single one of their community was affected by this punishment.

From this the Coptic people of Fir<sup>c</sup>awn understood that the storm was a punishment from Allāh ﷻ and they sent a delegation to plead with Nabī Mūsā ؑ, promising to accept his *Dīn* if he would make duʾā<sup>c</sup> for the cessation of the storm, which he did without the slightest hesitation. The storm abated and then ceased and the sun began once more to shine pleasantly.

When the punishment was over, Nabī Mūsā ؑ went to the people of Fir<sup>c</sup>awn and reminded them of their promise, but they mocked him saying, “We have seen this type of sorcery before as well.” And they jeered at Nabī Mūsā ؑ and rejected him.

Almost immediately after their rejection, the whole of Egypt was overtaken by massive swarms of locusts that settled everywhere and on everything and within an hour or two they left the orchards and the farms barren and all the crops stripped bare.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Every attempt to combat the locusts failed hopelessly. The locusts even ate the wooden roofs of the buildings but not a single garden or house of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl was attacked by the locusts.

Realizing that they would be destroyed, the people of Firʿawn once again hastened to Nabī Mūsā ؑ and pleaded with him solemnly promising to accept the *Dīn* if the calamity of the locusts were to be removed. Nabī Mūsā ؑ went to the edge of the River Nile and pointed his Staff to the east and west. Spontaneously the locusts formed into two swarms, one heading towards the east and one to the west. But not a single one of these people accepted the Way. And once again they mocked and rejected Nabī Mūsā ؑ.

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدَّمَ  
آيَاتٍ مُفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُجْرِمِينَ

faʿārsalna ʿalayhimu-ṭ-ṭūfana wa-l-jarada wa-l-qummala  
wa-ḍ-ḍafādiʿa wa-d-dama ʾāyātin mufaṣṣalātin fa ʾistakbarū  
wa kanū qawman mujrimīn

So We sent against them the flood and the locusts  
and the vermin and the frogs and the blood -  
a succession of clear signs.

But they were arrogant and were wicked people.

(Sūratu-l-Aʿrāf 7:133)

The homes and fields of the Egyptians were utterly inundated and destroyed by raging floodwaters. According to some Sahābah ؓ the '*tūfan*' (الطُّوفَان) mentioned in the ʾāyat as the first punishment refers to a plague of smallpox.

After pleading with Nabī Mūsā ؑ and pledging once again to accept Ṭawḥīd and free Banī ʾIsrāʾīl, this punishment too was lifted. But the evil Firʿawn and his people reneged and reverted to their kufr and oppression (*dhulm*/ظلم).

We can see this in our own world in which we live that is always the way of the oppressors. They say one thing and do another.

In any case this series of punishments which descended on Firʿawn and his people came again and again at monthly intervals.

The month after the ending of the locusts and frogs calamity, there began the punishment of lice and ticks. and vast clouds of lice and ticks rained on the Qibtiyyah.

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

The lice and ticks infested their hair, eyebrows and eyelashes. The immense pain caused by these blood-sucking vermin made the people to scream like insane persons. In addition, all the water and food of the Qibtiyyah were filled with lice and ticks. Any bowl of food or cup of water taken by a Qibt became immediately filled with lice and ticks. And once again, not a single member of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl was afflicted with this calamity.

Again, the Qibtiyyah came running, wailing and crying to Nabī Mūsā ؑ pleading and promising. They appealed to Nabī Mūsā ؑ to supplicate for the removal of the calamity. They pledged that this time they would for sure accept the Way and again pledged once again to set the people of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl free and again Nabī Mūsā ؑ filled with mercy and compassion supplicated to Allāh ﷻ to remove the plague. But once again, after lifting the punishment, the kuffār reneged and mocked Nabī Mūsā ؑ saying that Mūsā ؑ had no equal in the science of magic but that all these calamities were no more than that — *magik*.

The next month came and now Allāh ﷻ afflicted the Qibtiyyah with the punishment of frogs and suddenly the entire land was overrun by millions and millions of frogs. Their houses were invaded by frogs. Their beds, utensils, food and everything were filled with frogs. Ægypt had become a world of frogs. Every empty vessel became filled with frogs. The situation deteriorated so much that when a Copt would open his mouth to speak a frog would jump in it. But there was not a single frog in any home of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl.

Driven to hopelessness and helplessness, the Qibtiyyah once again petitioned Nabī Mūsā ؑ for succour, renewing their pledge and promise and once again he made duʿāʾ and the punishment ended as suddenly as it had arrived. The Qibtiyyah, instead of abiding by their pledge, reacted in their same incorrigible manner of rebellion, mocking and continuing to rejecting Mūsā ؑ.

Another month came and this time month, Allāh ﷻ afflicted the Qibtiyyah with the punishment of blood. All water was transformed into blood for the Copts. The Nile itself turned red and even the water which a Copt might be able to get from one of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl would turn to blood as soon as the water reached his mouth. Every utensil and every other item of the Qibtiyyah became blood soaked and they began to perish because of hunger and thirst.

Driven to abject misery by this deplorable state of affairs, Fir°awn finally resorted to a strategy which he believed would save the day for the Qibtiyyah. He ordered that with every Copt, one °Isrā°illi should join when drinking water and eating. The two had to eat and drink from one utensil. By this ruse Fir°awn thought that the water and food would not become blood. However, the share consumed by the °Isrā°illi would remain unaffected while the share of the Copt would become blood. When the °Isrā°illi drank from the utensil, the water remained unaffected but as soon as the Copt put it to his lips the water would become blood.

A woman from the Qibtiyyah pleaded with her °Isrā°illi neighbor saying, “I have been suffering from thirst for the past few days. Please take some water into your mouth and transfer it into my mouth with your mouth.” Her dire situation had driven this woman to this state of subservience to one who was held in utter contempt by the Qibtiyyah. She cried for mercy but no matter – as soon as the °Isrā°illi woman would spit out the water into her mouth, it would turn into blood, thus depriving the Copt from water.

Now Fir°awn too was suffering. He had managed through his storehouses and isolated palaces to avoid the worst effects of the earlier plagues. but now he did not have a drop of water. When he attempted to chew the leaves of trees, the juice would become blood in his mouth. Again the Copts came to Mūsā ﷺ crying for mercy. They again promised to honour their pledge. They pledged that if they again reneged from their pledge, then Allāh ﷻ should kill them all. Taking pity on them, Nabī Mūsā ﷺ supplicated to Allāh ﷻ and the punishment was lifted immediately. But these rebellious people who were confirmed to remain disbelievers (*kuffār/كفار*) in eternity, once again reneged and mocked and taunted Mūsā ﷺ.

At this point, perhaps to provide them with respite, Allāh ﷻ thereafter stopped the punishment for some time. During this time the people of Fir°awn became even more rebellious.

Nabī Mūsā ﷺ would daily invoke the curse of Allāh ﷻ on Fir°awn and his people, and Nabī Hārūn ﷺ would say, “*Amīn*”. But no further punishment descended on Fir°awn and his people and consequently they became more rebellious oppressive. Their worldly pomp and splendor all multiplied considerably during this time and they enjoyed immense wealth.



Ibn Abbas ؓ narrated that according to Rasulullāh ﷺ, in the land of Ægypt until the mountains of Ethiopia there flourished numerous mines of gold, silver and diamonds. All these mines were under the control and domination of Fir°awn and this was the primary source of the immense wealth enjoyed by the Copts, and it was this wealth which increased their rebellion.

The oppression of Fir°awn and his people exceeded all bounds. Then one day Nabī Mūsā ؑ supplicated with intense and passionate feelings whereupon, Jibrīl ؑ appeared and said, “Allāh ﷻ sends His Salām (سلام) with the message that He is listening to your supplication. The oppression of Fir°awn is not hidden from Allāh ﷻ and the cries of the agony of Banī °Isrā’īl reach directly to Allāh ﷻ. But He ﷻ says, ‘Despite this, Oh Mūsā! How can I punish Fir°awn while he daily feeds ten thousand destitute persons? Oh Mūsā! As long as Fir°awn continues his generosity to the poor I will not destroy him.’”

[Note: It was the daily practice of Fir°awn to feed ten thousand poor and destitute people. This was the mystery underlying the protection Fir°awn enjoyed from destruction by Divine Punishment. Rasulullāh ﷺ said,

“Sadqah extinguishes the Wrath of Allāh.” ]

However, Hāmān, who was the chief minister and advisor to Fir°awn, told him that due to the effects of the ‘magic’ (sihr/سحر) of Nabī Mūsā ؑ and the resultant calamities, the economic situation of the country has suffered grievously and hardships have grown everywhere. Due to these unforeseen calamities, the royal treasury was rapidly becoming depleted. He advised Fir°awn to exercise caution with regard to expenditure. It was not known how long Nabī Mūsā ؑ would remain an adversary, hence it was imperative to ensure that the economy was balanced. This advice was accepted by Fir°awn and the daily feeding scheme was drastically curbed and incrementally reduced, until the day when Fir°awn and his men were finally destroyed, there was not a single destitute Egyptian who was being fed by Fir°awn.

After the cessation of the series of calamities, Nabī Mūsā ؑ continued with his mission of Calling (da°wah/دعوة) the People to Allāh ﷻ and repeatedly proclaimed the Message of °Islām to Fir°awn and his people.

However, these people were incorrigibly intransigent and confirmed disbelievers. They refused to heed any of the callings of Nabī Mūsā ﷺ and, quite to the contrary, their transgression and rebellion increased considerably. This process of incremental rebellion continued until the time for the destruction of Firʿawn had arrived.



Now Allāh ﷻ instructed Nabī Mūsā ﷺ to gather his people and to depart from Āgypt during the night time.

Mūsā ﷺ called all of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl to gather at a particular spot on a certain night. The various chieftains of the tribes of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl were ordered to advise and instruct their people for the final departure from Āgypt.

Since this required that every member of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl had to be informed, this secret plan did not remain long hidden from Firʿawn.

When Firʿawn was informed that Banī ʾIsrāʾīl would be assembling, he summoned their leaders and questioned them about this planned event. They explained that the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ (عاشوراء) was a holy day of happiness in their culture because it was the day when Nabī ʾĀdām ﷺ was created, and thus the gathering of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl was to celebrate this happy occasion.

When Firʿawn heard this he was relieved and he allowed the gathering to proceed.

Finally, the momentous Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ arrived and the entire nation of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl began assembling from the early morning. When Nabī Mūsā ﷺ was satisfied that everyone had gathered, he issued orders for the great march to commence. It was midnight when they finally began their great migration and Nabī Mūsā ﷺ began by reciting the *Basmallah*.

Banī ʾIsrāʾīl at this point consisted of some 670,000 persons. Nabī Hārūn ﷺ was appointed to lead the vast procession while Nabī Mūsā ﷺ brought up the rear.

When this huge gathering reached a certain point, it appeared to them that they had lost the road. The march halted, the two prophets ﷺ conferred with each other. They were mystified by their inability to find the way leading out of Āgypt. The road was well known. What could have gone wrong? Immediately Nabī Mūsā ﷺ summoned all the old people for a meeting, asking, “The road is well known to us. Why are we lost? Why can we not find the way?”

## Mūsā ﷺ and the Parting

It was still quite dark, and they were unable to find the route which was a well-known established road. Finally one extremely old person (according to some narrations – a lady), spoke, “Oh Mūsā! I know the reason. A very important task has been left undone.” And the road will not be found as long as the obligation is not fulfilled.”

“At the time of the death of Nabī Yūsuf ﷺ, he had ordered his heirs and brothers that if and when Banī ʾIsrāʾīl ever departed from Āgypt they should take his coffin with them. Oh Mūsā ﷺ! We have not fulfilled this directive of Nabī Yūsuf ﷺ and hence we are unable to find the way out of Āgypt.”

Nabī Mūsā ﷺ immediately made an announcement on this matter and urged whoever was aware of the whereabouts of the grave of Nabī Yūsuf ﷺ to come forward. In the entire Ummah of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl there was only one person who was aware of the location of the grave of Nabī Yūsuf ﷺ.

A very old lady stepped forward.

Nabī Mūsā ﷺ said “Mother, do you know where the grave of Nabī Yūsuf ﷺ is?” and the old lady replied, “Yes, but I shall not give this information for free. I want something in return.” He ﷺ said, “Quick! Speak my mother. What is you want? Just ask” She said, Take me along with you as your close companion out of Āgypt so that on the Day of Qiyāmah I shall be regarded as your companion. I shall then show you where the grave of Nabī Yūsuf ﷺ is.”

Nabī Mūsā ﷺ immediately had the old lady seated on his camel and she indicated the location of the grave which was in the bed of a tributary of the River Nile from which, Nabī Mūsā ﷺ along with a few companions, retrieved the coffin. As soon as they had taken possession of the coffin of Nabī Yūsuf ﷺ the road became clear and Banī ʾIsrāʾīl resumed their journey out of Āgypt.

Just as Banī ʾIsrāʾīl resumed their journey Firʿawn was made aware of their flight, and when he realized that the purpose of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl gathering together was not to celebrate a festival, but was to prepare to leave Āgypt for good he was overcome with wrath and immediately issued orders to his army to pursue Banī ʾIsrāʾīl.

He went along with the army and issued orders to massacre every single soul, man, woman and child, and not to leave alive even one person from among them.

## Mūsā ﷺ and the Parting

Fir‘awn immediately set out in pursuit of Banī ‘Isrā‘īl with a massive army consisting of 100,000 men with spears, 100,000 archers, a cavalry of 70,000, and an infantry of 300,000. The cavalry mounted on racing camels moved swiftly in the bid to overtake Banī ‘Isrā‘īl. Fir‘awn and Hāmān were right in front leading the army on but at the same time, Nabī Mūsā ﷺ who was binging up the rear and hence facing them was also moving ahead swiftly with the people of Banī ‘Isrā‘īl overwhelmed by fear. The fear of the sudden appearance of Fir‘awn at the head of a massive army was uppermost in the minds of the people.

Suddenly and surprisingly and mysteriously Banī ‘Isrā‘īl found itself on the shores of the Red Sea. This was not the contemplated route they had chosen to lead them out of Ēgypt. Nabī Mūsā ﷺ was astonished and dumbfounded. He had thought he was heading north-north east towards the dry land of western Sinai in the general area of where Gaza is today, but by the decree of Allāh ﷻ he found himself with his ‘Ummah on the shores of the sea. To aggravate their despair, the sea on this day was excessively stormy and waves were rising everywhere in the sea.

The journey came to an abrupt halt. Fear and anxiety created panic among Banī ‘Isrā‘īl. How would they ever cross the sea? From where and when (given the army of Fir‘awn just behind them) would they be able to acquire thousands of boats to transport them across the stormy waters?

While Banī ‘Isrā‘īl were transfixed in fear and bewilderment, they heard the roar of the racing war camels of Fir‘awn’s cavalry approaching. There was absolute pandemonium and panic among Banī ‘Isrā‘īl and they began screaming, “Mūsā! Mūsā ! We have been overtaken by Fir‘awn. You have brought us to our destruction.”

فَاتَّبَعُوهُمْ مُشْرِقِينَ

fa‘ātba‘ūhum mushriqīna

And they overtook them at sunrise!

(Sūratu-sh-Shur‘arā‘ 26:60)

فَلَمَّا تَرَأَى الْجَمْعَانِ قَالِ أَصْحَابُ مُوسَى إِنَّا لَمُدْرَكُونَ

falamā tarā‘a-l-jam‘ani qāla ‘ashābu mūsā ‘inna lamudrakūn

And when the two hosts came into sight of one another

Musa’s companions said, “We will surely be overtaken!”

(Sūratu-sh-Shur‘arā‘ 26:61)

Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

Then Mūsā said,

قَالَ كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

qala kallāa ʾinna maʿiya rabbī sayahdīni

He said, “Never! My Lord is with me and He will guide me.”

(Sūratu-sh-Shurʿarāā° 26:62)

When Firʿawn caught sight of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl stranded on the shores of the Red Sea, he was overwhelmed with delight. He issued orders for the assault and the final massacre

While the army was formulating the plan for the massacre, suddenly an intensely dark fog surrounded the entire area, totally concealing Banī ʾIsrāʾīl. The intensity of the darkness did not permit the army of Firʿawn to advance. Helpless, Firʿawn issued orders for a halt until the fog lifted. He told his troops that in front of Banī ʾIsrāʾīl was the Red Sea and behind them was his army and so Banī ʾIsrāʾīl was hopelessly trapped. Convinced that there was no escape for Banī ʾIsrāʾīl, Firʿawn patiently waited for the fog to lift and clear out; over-confident and sure that death surrounded Banī ʾIsrāʾīl on all sides. It was only a matter of time before every soul would be put to the sword.

Meanwhile Nabī Mūsā ؑ was weeping and supplicating in Sajdah, making deep and desperate duʿā° for the help of Allāh ﷻ. While he ؑ was still wrapped deep in his Sajdah the following Revelation (wahīl/وحى) descended from Allāh ﷻ.

فَاَوْحَيْنَا اِلَى مُوسَى اَنْ اَضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ

fāʾawḥayna ʾila mūsā ʾani ʾidrib biʿaṣāka-l-baḥra

We revealed to Mūsā “Strike the sea with your staff “

(Sūratu-sh-Shurʿarāā° 26:63)

“It will provide a road for you.”



وَاَنْجَيْنَا مُوسَى وَمَنْ مَعَهُ اَجْمَعِينَ • ثُمَّ اغْرَقْنَا الْاٰخَرِيْنَ

wa ʾanjaynā mūsā wa man maʿahu ʾajmaʿīn  
ṭhumma ʾaghraqna-l-akḥarīn

And We saved Mūsā and those with him, every one!

And We drowned the others.

(Sūratu-sh-Shurʿarāā° 26:65)

## Mūsā ؑ and the Parting

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ

°inna fī dhalika la'ayah.

wa mā kāna aktharuhum mu'minīna

In this [story] behold, there is a message [unto all people],  
even though most of them will not believe [it].

(Sūratu-sh-Shur'arā° 26:190)



So this is the first half of the story of Nabī Mūsā ؑ. As I said at the beginning I would not be able to tell the entire story due to the constraints of time but I hope, °inshāllāh, to be able to relate the second part of the story at another time — of the time in Caanan, and the Years in the Wilderness, the Revelation of the Torah, and the receiving of the Commandments and the Golden Calf, of his meeting with Khidr ؑ and even of how he slapped the angel of death in the face when he was informed it was time to die.

Indeed there are so many more stories about Nabī Mūsā ؑ but for today they will have to wait and I pray to Allāh ﷻ that I will have the opportunity to tell some more of them at a later date.

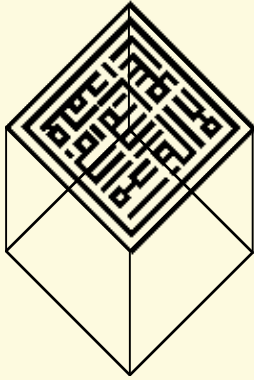
I would like to thank a dear friend from Hyderabad who put me on to the book “*Qasas al-Anbiya*” (قصص الأنبياء) or Stories of the Prophets that her mom read to her as a child and also the authors of the book “*Fir'oun, Hadhrat Musa and the Taqdeer of Allāh*” which provided me with a structure for relating many of these stories. There is really so much we need to learn about the lives of the Prophets ؑ and even when we think we know about them there is so much we don't know like, for instance, where did the staff of Nabī Mūsā ؑ come from.

wa-llahu °alim



The Maqām of Nabī Mūsā ؑ  
above the Dead Sea in Occupied Palestine





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